

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 CANBER 05758 01 OF 02 270841Z

20

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SAM-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10 /090 W

----- 096162

R 270733Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6463

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 CANBERRA 5758

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: US, AS

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MAKES STATEMENT ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR

1. SUMMARY: ON AUGUST 26 PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MADE A STATEMENT ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR IN PARLIAMENT. SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK ATTACKED THE STATEMENT AS OFFERING NOTHING CHARACTERIZING THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN THE FOLLOWING TERMS QTE. IT IS COURAGEOUSLY AND INDEPENDENTLY WASHING ITS HANDS OF THE WHOLE QUESTION. END QTE WHITLAM'S STATEMENT WAS CRITICIZED IN SIMILAR TERMS BY LEFT WING MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FULL TEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT IS REPEATED BELOW:

QTE.3. THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMED THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS LAST MAY AND JUNE IN DILI AND MACAO BETWEEN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. IN OUR VIEW, THE PROGRAM MAPPED OUT AT MACAO, PROVIDING FOR STEADY FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARDS DECOLONIZATION AND FREE ELECTIONS FOR A CONSISTUENT ASSEMBLY, WENT A LONG WAY TOWARDS THE OBJECTIVES WE SUPPORT FOR THE TERRITORY. IT ALSO FOLLOWS, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS MOST CONCERNED BY THE PRESENT SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. WHAT BEGAN AS A SHOW OF FORCE BY

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CANBER 05758 01 OF 02 270841Z

THE UDT PARTY ON 10 AUGUST HAS DETERIORATED INTO VIR-

TUAL CIVIL WAR WITH WIDESPREAD LOSS OF LIFE. THE UDT AND THE RIVAL FRETELIN PARTY ARE STRUGGLING FOR POWER IN DILI AND IN MANY PARTS OF THE INTERIOR. THE TIMOR- ESE POLICE APPEAR TO HAVE SIDED WITH UDT, WHILE THE MUCH MORE NUMEROUS MILITARY IS PREDOMINANTLY FOR FRETELIN.

QTE.4. THE POLARISATION BETWEEN THE 2 GROUPS NOW SEEMS TO BE COMPLETE. BOTH GROUPS ARE ARMED WITH PORTUGUESE WEAPONS CAPTURED AT THE TIME OF THE INITIAL UDT SHOW OF FORCE OR HAVING BEEN TAKEN OVER TO FRETELIN OR UDT WITH THE DEFECTING TROOPS AND POLICE. APODETI, THE PARTY FAVOURING INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA, IS NOT A MAJOR PARTICIPANT IN THE STRUGGLE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME REPORTS OF ATTACKS ON ITS MEMBERS.

QTE.5. AS A RESULT OF THE EVACUATION OF MOST OF THE PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATION AND MILITARY, THE GOVERNOR NOW REMAINS IN DILI WITH ONLY A VERY SMALL STAFF AND WITH NO CHANCE OF EXERTING CONTROL OVER MORE THAN A SMALL SECTION OF DILI. THE GOVERNOR THUS RETAINS NO MORE THAN THE FORMAL TRAPPINGS OF OFFICE. THE PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES IN A COMMUNICATION TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO CONTROL THE SITUATION.

QTE.6. SEVERAL DAYS AGO THE GOVERNOR ISSUED AN APPEAL FOR INTERNATIONAL FORCES TO BE SENT TO TIMOR TO CONTROL THE SITUATION AND TO BRING AN END TO THE BLOODSHED. THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ISSUED APPEALS FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS THAT INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA MIGHT HELP, EXPECIALLY WITH THE EVACUATION OF PORTUGUESE AND FOREIGN NATIONALS FROM TIMOR. AUSTRALIA HAS EXTENDED CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT IN VARIOUS EVACUATION OPERATIONS. WE STAND READY TO TAKE PART IN ANY HUMANITARIAN ACTION THAT MAY BE PRACTICABLE.

QTE.7. WE HAVE BEEN, HOWEVER, AND REMAIN OPPOSED TO AUSTRALIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT. ONE OF THE FIRST POLICY DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, ON ASSUMING OFFICE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 CANBER 05758 01 OF 02 270841Z

IN DECEMBER 1972, WAS TO DETERMINE THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD NOT INTERVENE AGAIN IN LAND WARS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. THIS APPLIES AS MUCH TO THE CIVIL WAR IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR AS TO THE EARLIER CIVIL WAR IN VIETNAM.

QTE.8. ON POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS MOST CONCERNED, NAMELY, THE GOVERNMENT OF

PORTUGAL AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, DOES NOT REGARD ITSELF AS A PARTY PRINCIPAL IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. WE CONTINUE TO HOLD THAT THE FUTURE OF THE TERRITORY IS A MATTER FOR RESOLUTION BY PORTUGAL AND THE TIMORESE PEOPLE THEMSELVES WITH INDONESIA ALSO OCCUPYING AN IMPORTANT PLACE BECAUSE OF ITS PREDOMINANT INTEREST.

QTE. 9. THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THAT THERE ARE SOME WHO BELIEVE THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD ACCEPT SOME POLITICAL OBLIGATION IN REGARD TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR, AND EVEN THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD STEP IN AND ATTEMPT TO ARBITRATE BETWEEN THE COMPETING POLITICAL FACTIONS. THE GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THOSE WHO HAVE PUT FORWARD THESE VIEWS HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY GENUINE FEELINGS OF CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF THE TIMORESE. BUT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ITSELF THINK THESE VIEWS REFLECT THE BEST APPROACH FOR AUSTRALIA. IT BELIEVES THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THESE VIEWS COULD LEAD TO A SITUATION WHERE AUSTRALIA WAS EXERCISING A QUASI-COLONIAL ROLE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR, AND MIGHT LEAD TO THE POINT WHERE WE WERE ASSUMING SOME DE FACTO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TERRITORY.

QTE. 10. BUT THE GOVERNMENT DOES VIEW WITH SERIOUS CONCERN THE RECENT TURN OF EVENTS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. THE IMMEDIATE NEED, OF COURSE, IS TO BRING THE FIGHTING TO AN END. THIS IS BOTH A NECESSARY PRE-CONDITION TO ANY POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AS WELL AS AN URGENT NEED IF THE BLOODSHED IS TO STOP AND RELIEF WORK IS TO BEGIN. I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAL ON BEHALF OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO ALL PARTIES ENGAGED IN THE FIGHTING TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS AND TO END THE BLOODSHED. I HAVE SAID THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 CANBER 05758 01 OF 02 270841Z

CARRY FORWARD RELIEF OR REHABILITATION WITHOUT RESTORATION OF ORDER IN THE TERRITORY. THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BRINGING AN END TO THE FIGHTING MUST CONTINUE TO REST WITH PORTUGAL. IN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW, PORTUGAL CANNOT SIMPLY WASH ITS HANDS OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 CANBER 05758 02 OF 02 270834Z

20

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-10 /090 W

----- 095818

R 270733Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6464

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 CANBERRA 5758

QTE. 11. THE PRESENT SITUATION, OF COURSE, MAY HAVE PASSED THE POINT OF NO-RETURN. IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRM POLICIES IN LISBON, DEFECTION OF LOCAL OFFICIALS AND LOCAL MILITARY FORCES MAY NOW BE COMPLETE. NONETHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT PORTUGAL IS TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO RETRIEVE SOME LOST GROUND BY SENDING A NEGOTIATING TEAM WITH A VIEW TO PERSUADING FRETILIN AND UDT TO STOP FIGHTING AND TO AGREE TO NEGOTIATE NEW ARRANGEMENTS AMONG THE TIMORESE PARTIES FOR ORDERLY DECOLONISATION. THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH DR. SANTOS, THE FORMER MINISTER FOR INTERTERRITORIAL CO-ORDINATION HAS APPROACHED THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THE RESULTS OF THIS APPROACH ARE NOT YET CLEAR. THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS THAT A GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE MIGHT BE PROPOSED TO HELP MEDIATE A SETTLEMENT IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. BUT NONE OF THIS HAS GONE VERY FAR AND WITHOUT SOME RESTORATION OF BASIC ORDER IN THE TERRITORY IT IS NOT EASY TO SEE HOW A UN GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE, WHOSE ROLE WOULD BE ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL IN CHARACTER, COULD FUNCTION ON THE GROUND. THE SAME CONSIDERATION APPLIES TO VARIOUS IDEAS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORT.

QTE. 12. I RETURN, THEREFORE, TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY IS TO PUT AN END TO THE KILLING AND
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CANBER 05758 02 OF 02 270834Z

FIGHTING AND TO RESTORE ORDER. THIS OBJECTIVE REQUIRES THE ACTIVE INTERVENTION OF PORTUGAL ITSELF. IT IS A RESPONSIBILITY THAT CANNOT BE SHRUGGED OFF ON TO OTHERS

SUCH AS AUSTRALIA. WE HAVE NO NATIONAL OBLIGATION OR INTEREST IN GETTING REINVOLVED IN COLONIAL OR POST COLONIAL AFFAIRS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR AT THE VERY TIME WHEN PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S IMMINENT INDEPENDENCE IS LEADING TO THE ENDING OF OUR COLONIAL ROLE THERE. WE HAVE NO ETHNIC OR CULTURAL TIES WITH THE TIMORESE WHICH WOULD SUGGEST A ROLE FOR AUSTRALIA IN SUBSTITUTION FOR PORTUGAL IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

QTE. 13. THE OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRY IN ALL THIS IS, OF COURSE, INDONESIA, WITH WHICH WE HAVE BEEN IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH IN DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR IN RECENT DAYS. INDONESIA HAS SHARED THE AUSTRALIAN CONCERN ABOUT THE EVIDENT DRIFT IN PORTUGUESE POLICIES AND, LIKE US, HAS URGED ON THE PORTUGUESE THE NEED TO REASSERT PORTUGUESE CONTROL IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. WE, FOR OUR PART, UNDERSTAND INDONESIA'S CONCERN THAT THE TERRITORY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BECOME A SOURCE OF INSTABILITY IN INDONESIA'S BORDER. PORTUGUESE TIMOR IS IN MANY WAYS PART OF THE INDONESIAN WORLD AND ITS FUTURE IS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER A GREAT IMPORTANCE TO INDONESIA.

QTE. 14. INDONESIA POLICY IS TO RESPECT THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDONESIAN LEADERS HAVE OFTEN DENIED THAT INDONESIA HAS ANY TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS TOWARDS PORTUGUESE TIMOR. NEVERTHELESS, INDONESIA'S CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE TERRITORY HAS NOW LED HER TO OFFER, IF PORTUGAL SO REQUESTS, TO ASSIST IN RESTORING ORDER THERE. PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT INDONESIA WOULD ONLY WISH TO ACT AT PORTUGAL'S BIDDING AND THAT THE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE THE LIMITED ONE OF RESTORING CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD ALLOW ORDERLY SELFDETERMINATION TO PROCEED. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS FREQUENTLY STATED ITS CONCERN THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE TERRITORY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 CANBER 05758 02 OF 02 270834Z

QTE. 15. WHATEVER EXTERNAL EFFORTS MIGHT ACCOMPLISH, THE HOSTILITY AND MISTRUST BETWEEN FRETILIN AND UDT REMAIN THE MAIN THREAT TO FUTURE STABILITY IN THE TERRITORY. THIS HOSTILITY AND MISTRUST INDEED FORM ONE OF THE MOST DISAPPOINTING ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE DASHED THE HOPES FOR PORTUGUESE TIMOR WHICH FOLLOWED THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AND PORTUGUESE COLONIAL POLICY IN LISBON. IN A LITTLE OVER A YEAR, THE SITUATION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR HAS BECOME A VERY DANGEROUS ONE, MAINLY - IT MUST BE SAID - BECAUSE OF THE SHORTSIGHTEDNESS OF SOME OF THE TERRITORY'S ASPIRING

POLITICAL LEADERS. IT IS A MATTER OF RECORD THAT NONE OF THE THREE MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE TERRITORY HAS SHOWN ANY GENUINE WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THE OTHERS. EACH DEMANDS THAT IT ALONE BE RECOGNISED AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE NATIONALIST GROUP. NONE SEEMS PREPARED TO TEST ITS CLAIMS TO LEAD THE COUNTRY THROUGH ANY CONVENTIONAL FORM OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

QTE. 16. AT THE MOMENT, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT HOW EVENTS WILL MOVE OR WHAT CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION AUSTRALIA MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE. OUR FIRST TASK WILL BE TO ALERT TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, BUT HERE THERE ARE REAL QUESTIONS OF PRACTICABILITY. WE SHALL GIVE WHAT PRACTICAL HELP WE CAN TO THE PORTUGUESE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO MEDIATE AND TO BRING AN END TO THE FIGHTING. I REPEAT MY CALL TO THE PARTIES FOR A CEASE-FIRE AND THE ENDING OF THE BLOODSHED. AS EVENTS DEVELOP IT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR ME TO KEEP THE HOUSE FURTHER INFORMED.
END QTE.
PERCIVAL

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, COLONIALISM, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CANBER05758
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750296-0515
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750810/aaaaairl.tel
Line Count: 295
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 FEB 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 FEB 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <30 JAN 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MAKES STATEMENT ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR
TAGS: PGOV, US, AS, PT, (WHITLAM, GOUGH E)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006